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Going Against the Grain
or
An Amiga User's Story

By Adam Trionfo

Amiga users tend to be very dedicated to the machine(s) they own. I have met more than a few folks who get by, even these days, using floppy based Amiga 500 computers. Amiga users, though seemingly more independent than users of other platforms, are actually more prone to stick together. This is because there are so few of us around. We stick together closely so that we may get the most use out of our machines. Imagine though, for a moment, that there were no other Amiga users around to help when you screw up your hard drive, lose your Amiga 500's only boot floppy, or need some help installing some new hardware. How would you cope? Would you still be willing to stick by your trusted Amiga? I say yes, but the words come out with hesitation.

I have been exchanging email with an Amiga user named Malcolm Brenner. Malcolm lives about two hours away, in Gallop, NM. When he passes through Albuquerque he tries to stop by University Computers (Albuquerque's only Amiga friendly store) and attend Amiga meetings. According to Malcolm, he is the only Amiga user in Gallop (I find that far too easy to believe). I wondered why he had not folded in to the PC market. I finally asked him this question, "I'm curious- if you are the only Amiga user in Gallop- why go against the grain? I imagine it is rather difficult." His reply follows:

"Adam, you raise a very interesting question. There are historic, practical and personal reasons. Historically, my first computer was an Amiga 500 in 1992. I have gone up from there. Practically, used Amigas are CHEAP. I have two, one for me and one for my kids. It not only keeps them from messing up my computer, it gives us some redundancy. (You don't know how scared I was yesterday [when my 2000 didn't boot]! I have just finished writing a 750-page book manuscript, which I had backed up onto a single pair of floppies. I quickly took them to the other machine and backed them up onto another pair and

NewMAUS News

Meetings

The NewMAUS meetings are held at the UNM Law Library and scheduled as follows:
2nd Thursday
Main Meeting - 7:00pm - Programs on a variety of subjects.
4th Saturday
Potpourri - 1:00pm - Open format, Hardware/Software. Bring your problems and/or your system and we'll help.

YES!!! You can bring your computer.

Because of UNM parking rules, please park on the street for Thursday meetings.

NewMAUS Freeware Policy

Club freeware and Fish disk copies are available FREE to members whose dues are current. However, the members must provide their own formatted disks.

that machine's HD.

My personal reasons are rather philosophical. I am a true iconoclast. The fact that everbody is doing something one way is no reason for me to do it that way. I hate *Windows*, from a technical and aesthetic point of view it appears to me to be nothing but a series of software kluges on top of kluges. It is a clunky, inept, failure-prone operating system, and I don't give a damn what the rest of the world thinks or does. The Amiga's "failure" has more to do with Commodore's stupidity than any inherent flaws in the machine; in fact, Amigas are superior in every way to comparable PC's. I might own a Mac but at this point why change? I learn a lot more trying to get my Amiga to do what I want, and besides, I can't afford two new computers. It is more entertaining to see how far I can push this one, and when the new Amiga hardware comes out, I'll be the first in line!"

Is there any Amiga user that doesn't feel strongly about the use of their machine? How many of you read Malcolm's statement and thought to yourself, "Yea, I feel the same way"? It isn't a secret that the Amiga is more than just the sum of its' parts: it is more than just a computer. It is a philosophy for some; for others it is a way of life. Will the new Amiga computers that Malcolm hints at follow this same path? We hope so. But if they do not live up to our expectations, the classic Amiga is still here. And so is the Amiga users' group.

Why Microsoft Sucks

by Chris Federico

As I write this on my Amiga 2500, the IBM clone that was recently given to me is sitting a few feet away, attempting to power up. I got on Yahoo! Chat a few days ago and tonight I thought it might be neat to participate again for a little while. In the time it's taken me to turn on the Amiga, wait for the Workbench to load, load this word processing application (*Excellence!*) and type to this point, the *Windows '98* title screen has stayed up. It's starting up, you see. It's the first popularly awaited upgrade in the history of home computing to run **slower** than its predecessor, and **yet people still buy it**.

Ah! There it goes. Attaboy. Now to try and load *Explorer* and get the chat applet running without experiencing any lock-ups. Should be fun.

Adam says that the reason it takes '98 so long to start is that it needs more RAM than '95 did. I don't have enough RAM for everything '98 does when it starts up, so it's using my hard disk to store temporary data. Microsoft instituted this "upgrade," in my learned opinion, to force people to buy more RAM, more chips, more everything. It's an altogether commercial corporation. The love of hacking, the fascination with the possibilities inherent in bringing computers into the homes of laymen, is gone.

Back in the heyday of the Commodore 64 and Atari 8-bits, the late-'70s Apple mentality was still rampant: Those who made the machines, operating systems and software were excited about the craft to such an extent that sales, while still vital for obvious reasons, weren't the impetus behind their dogged pioneering. They stood behind their products, remained proud of them for years and squeezed every drop of potential out of them.

Now, thanks to Microsoft and to a slightly lesser extent Intel, that moonstruck community is extinct as far as modern computing goes. It's all saleability: goading the customer into buying "bigger and faster." There's no exploring or revolutionizing to be done because chips and software become obsolete -- deliberately -- within months of being issued. I wouldn't be surprised to learn of a cooperative crossover deal between Microsoft and Intel. Never mind Microsoft's monopoly; that's another whole subject in itself, one that's covered amply in the mainstream press due to government lawsuits against Mr. Gates. I'm happy that those suits exist (or is it obvious?).

But how about the products themselves? Now that Microsoft has muscled its way onto every IBM and clone on a variety of levels, and sold its flash to every new computing enthusiast thanks to the lingering naivete of the average consumer, can we at least find more good things than bad about the magic potion that Mr. Bill's Traveling Show has preached about?

Nope. For one thing, the hard drive keeps going and going. You can't move the damn mouse pointer without hearing that annoying muted clacking. What the hell is it loading all the time? It gets in the way of operation; half the time, double-clicking on an icon won't execute its program because the OS thought you only single-clicked, because it

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A Helpful Hint for CrossDOS Users

By Adam Trionfo

Lately I have met people who are having trouble with *Cross-DOS*, the program that allows IBM PC disks to be read on an Amiga. Two primary reasons exist:

1) The improper use of IBM formatted high density disks on an Amiga low density drive. Use 720K IBM formatted disks, not high density disks. Simple.

2) This second reason is far less obvious. *Windows 95, 98* and *NT* do not format disks in the EXACT same way as *MS-DOS*. Even though *MS-DOS* has no trouble reading *Windows 9x* formatted disks, the Amiga versions of *Cross-DOS* prior to version 7 do (this means all versions of *CrossDOS* included with the Amiga OS will eventually give you a problem at some point-- unless you only use *MS-DOS*). *CrossDOS 7* is the newest version of *CrossDOS* and is easily obtained from any Amiga dealer. If you need to exchange files with a *Windows* box, this program is the way to do it.

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was busy doing that mysterious pseudo-disk-access (there are technical reasons for this, but none offer any defense; suffice to say that nearly every intentionally memory-intensive *Windows* program that's been released is trying to work with the antiquated, slow *MS-DOS* that's hiding behind it). The way Windows accesses the hard disk is cumbersome and inefficient.

Another thing: All of these lock-ups aren't necessary. I'll repeat that for the morons at work who think they're computer programmers because they figured out how to change the font size in Word: IT'S NOT A NATURAL FUNCTION OF COMPUTERS TO LOCK-UP CONSTANTLY.

Chat didn't work, by the way. It's locked-up. I'm serious. It's convenient timing, considering the subject material of this article, but now I have to reset the computer.

That's another thing. Why the hell should I have to read a message telling me I didn't shut my OS down "properly?" There's an on/off switch. What else do you need, y'know? And you're going to tell me that this is well-written software? And the *coup-de-grace*: If you shut down "correctly," you get large, important letters stating, "It is now safe to turn off your computer." Oh, THANK YOU, High and Exalted Mystery Machine! Don't explode or anything, okay? It's an intimidation factor that was researched and tested by Microsoft's marketing division. Make people feel that their computers are intimidating machines controlling them, instead of the other way around, and you won't have those annoying bursts of independent creativity that could jeopardize big, blanketing companies like Microsoft.

I'll conclude with just one sentence: Support your local Amiga users' group.

New Mexico AMIGA Users Society

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SUMMER 1999

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
June 27	June 28	June 29	June 30	July 1	July 2	July 3
July 4	July 5	July 6	July 7	July 8	July 9 **NewMAUS** 7:00 pm	July 10
July 11	July 12	July 13	July 14	July 15	July 16	July 17
July 18	July 19	July 20	July 21	July 22	July 23	July 24 **NewMAUS** 1:00 pm
July 25	July 26	July 27	July 28	July 29	July 30	July 31
Aug. 1	Aug. 2	Aug. 3	Aug. 4	Aug. 5	Aug. 6	Aug. 7
Aug. 8	Aug. 9	Aug. 10	Aug. 11	Aug. 12 **NewMAUS** 7:00 pm	Aug. 13	Aug. 14
Aug. 15	Aug. 16	Aug. 17	Aug. 18	Aug. 19	Aug. 20	Aug. 21 **NewMAUS** 1:00 pm
Aug. 22	Aug. 23	Aug. 24	Aug. 25	Aug. 26	Aug. 27	Aug. 28
Aug. 29	Aug. 30	Aug. 31	Sept. 1	Sept. 2	Sept. 3	Sept. 4
Sept. 5	Sept. 6	Sept. 7	Sept. 8	Sept. 9 **NewMAUS** 7:00 pm	Sept, 10	Sept. 11
Sept. 12	Sept. 13	Sept. 14	Sept. 15	Sept. 16	Sept. 17	Sept. 18 **NewMAUS** 1:00 pm
Sept. 19	Sept. 20	Sept. 21	Sept. 22	Sept. 23	Sept. 24	Sept. 25
Sept. 26	Sept. 27	Sept. 28	Sept. 29	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 2

NewMAUS = New Mexico Amiga Users Society, AAG = Amiga ARTISITS Group, NMG = NewMAUS MULTIMEDIA Group, Tech = NewMAUS TECHNICAL SIG

MAUS DROPPINGS

Amiga, Inc.

www.amiga.com

NewMAUS Homepage:

www.rt66.com/~randyc/nmaus.html

maintained by Randy Cutts

Amiga Web Directory

www.cucug.org/amiga.html

Phoenix Rising BBS:

880-0410 (28,800 baud)
880-9713 (14,400 baud)

provided by Mitch Dulaney (Striker)

Amiga Report

www.cucug.org/ar/ar.html

Aminet

wuarchive.wustl.edu/aminet/

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